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pads 142 are provided on the at least one flexible extension 140." Col. 5, lines 19-21. In other words, the pads (142) are simply traces without protrusions. In contrast, the claimed protrusion is formed **on top of** the trace (Claim 1; also Spec Page 5, lines 9-11). For example, protrusions may be formed by applying 0.120" of electroless nickel **on a copper trace** and then applying 0.030" electroless gold on the nickel. Spec at page 6, lines 1-5. As recited in claims 5 and 6, respectively, the protrusions may be malleable or resilient. Whatever the materials, properties and dimensions, traces with protrusions are distinct from pads. Applicant therefore requests that the rejection of claim 1 and the associated dependent claims 2-3, 5, 6 and 13 be withdrawn.

Claim 12 distinguishes Sugimoto by reciting "at least one conductive signal trace ... accessible for direct electrical connection with a corresponding signal trace." While Sugimoto teaches that the circuit boards are in face-to-face contact, the connected terminals are on opposite sides of the circuit boards rather than the sides that are in contact. Sugimoto teaches a flexible wire connector (101) that is used to bridge the terminals. In contrast, the claimed signal trace is accessible for direct electrical connection with a corresponding signal trace, i.e., without a flexible wire bridge. As shown in Fig. 2 of this application, the connected traces themselves are mated. As discussed in the Background section of this application, features such as vias and metallic pads (and most likely a flexible wire bridge) contribute to problems such as impedance mismatches and cross-talk in applications with high frequency signals (See Spec at Page 2). This problem is mitigated by directly connecting corresponding traces. Applicant therefore requests that the rejection of claim 12 and associated dependent claims 29-33 be withdrawn.

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Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Holmes W. Anderson, Applicants' Attorney at 978-264-6664 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application, including all claims currently under examination, is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date


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